

2 – 4 DEMAND FOR HAZARDOUS WASTE FACILITIES DECREASING

When state and federal hazardous waste management laws and implementing rules became effective in the late 1970s there became an instant demand for permitted hazardous waste disposal facilities in the United States to handle the large amounts of newly regulated waste. The result of this demand was an effort to site such facilities throughout the country to manage these wastes. For several years the hazardous waste management industry grew in all parts of the country. In recent years this demand has decreased significantly for the following reasons:

1. Because of the tremendous expense of removing large quantities of hazardous wastes from so-called Superfund sites, the federal Environmental Protection Agency has, in recent years, allowed many of these abandoned sites to be closed “in place” rather than sending the wastes to commercial disposal facilities. Requirements such as restricted access, groundwater monitoring, installation of impermeable liners and caps, etc., have been implemented to insure protection of the public and the environment. This policy has resulted in significantly less waste being disposed in commercial waste facilities and has caused increased competition between facilities.
2. Expense of disposal has also caused operating industrial facilities which have hazardous wastes to reduce the amounts of waste they have to send to commercial hazardous waste disposal facilities. Wastes can be reduced by recycling them on-site for reuse in industrial processes. They can also be sent off-site to a commercial recycling facility. Many companies are using less toxic chemicals in their processes. This results in less quantities of hazardous waste that needs to be disposed.
3. Liability is high for companies who improperly manage hazardous wastes. Reducing the amount of waste reduces the liability.

A combination of the above factors has resulted in significantly less waste being managed at commercial hazardous waste companies. Competition for the decreasing waste stream has reduced the number of companies in this business.